

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, HA

SUBJECT: LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN HAITIAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY

REF: STATE 076035

1. AS AFL-CIO IS AWARE, HAITIAN UNIONS ARE EITHER NONEXISTENT OR NOT ORGANIZED IN A FORM WHICH WOULD COMPARE WITH U.S. UNIONS. FOR TEXTILES THERE IS A SYNDICAT DES OUVRIERS DE LA CONFECTION, WHOSE PRESIDENT IS LISTED AS JOSEPH DOUGE, BUT IT IS AN UNKNOWN PAPER ORGANIZATION WITH NO LABOR CONTRACTS WITH ANY TEXTILE PLANT. IN ANY CASE, ALL HAITIAN UNIONS ARE CONSIDERED DUVALIERIST ORGANIZATIONS RATHER THAN THOSE CATEGORIZED IN REFTEL.

2. UNION RIGHTS IN THEORY - THE 1961 DUVALIERIST LABOR CODE IS BASED TODAY ON ARTICLE 174 OF THE 1964 CONSTITUTION, WHICH DOES NOT GUARANTEE THE RIGHT TO UNIONISM PER SE, RATHER IT STATES THAT "WORK SHALL BE GOVERNED BY A LOBOR CODE WHOSE CHIEF PURPOSE SHALL BE TO HARMONIZE THE RALATION BETWEEN CAPITAL AND LABOR AND WHICH SHALL BE FOUNDED ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES AIMED AT IMPROVE-
MENT IN THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF WORKERS". NEVERTHELESS, THE CODE DOES GIVE WORKERS THE RIGHT TO FORM UNIONS AND STATES THAT WORKERS CANNOT BE PREVENTED FROM JOINING UNIONS (ARTB
VF260). IT PERMITS PROFESSIONAL UNIONS,

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VERTICAL UNIONS IN A SINGLE ENTERPRISE, HORIZONTAL UNIONS

AMONG VARIOUS ENTERPRISES, AND "MIXED UNIONS" OF PERSONS OF UNCONNECTED PROFESSIONS IN REMOTE AREAS (ART. 273). MOREOVER, UNIONS ARE PERMITTED TO JOIN TOGETHER IN FEDERATIONS AND CONFEDERATIONS (ART. 284). STRIKES ARE PERMITTED AGAINST PRIVATE EMPLOYERS (ARTS. W61 223), BUT LABOR TRIBUNALS ARE EXPECTED TO RESOLVE MOST DISPUTES (CHAPTER VI).

3. UNIONISM IN PRACTICE - SOME OF THE OLDER MANUFACTURING PLANTS HAVE WORKERS' COUNCILS WHICH NEGOTIATE WITH MANAGEMENT ON SLARY, WORKING CONDITIONS AND SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS. ALTHOUGH THEIR POWERS ARE SHARPLY LIMITED, AND THEIR FIELD OF OPERATIONS RESTRICTED TO THE SINGLE PLANT, THEY DO EXERT SOME POWER, SOMETIMES THROUGH PALACE CONNECTIONS, AND DO PROVIDE SOME BENEFITS FOR THEIR WORKERS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN MID-1974, THERE WAS WORK STOPPAGE OF SEVERAL DAYS AT THE LARGEST TEXTILE PLANT IN HAITI AND SIMILAR STOPPAGE TOOK PLACE AT A SUGAR MILL. IN ADDITION, ONE GOH OFFICIAL RECENTLY CLAIMED THAT AVERAGE SALARIES IN THE PLANTS WITH WORKERS' COUNCILS ARE BETWEEN \$2.00 AND \$3.00 PER DAY, INSTEAD OF THE \$2.00 AVERAGE IN OTHER INDUSTRIAL PLANTS.

4. TEXTILE INDUSTRY - WITH RESPECT TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, WORKERS' COUNCILS EXIST ONLY IN THE OLDER PLANTS PRODUCING FOR THEYEGSTIC MARKET, BUT NOT IN THE NEWLY INSTALLED ASSEMBLY AND SEWING PLANTS PRODUCING FOR EXPORT, MAINLY TO THE U.S.

5. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO DRAW UPON FOREGOING FOR TRANSMITTAL TO AFL-CIO ON UNCLASSIFIED BASIS.
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